

REMARKS

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the grant of a personal interview to Applicants' representative, James Heintz, by Examiner Merek on January 22, 2004. At the interview, the Allen, Hammond and Dietrich references were discussed. Applicants' representative stated Applicants' position, as further described below, that the O-ring 3 and the clamps 4/5 depicted in the various figures of the Dietrich reference were not the fillet and sealing band of the claims. However, at the interview, Examiner Merek noted that if the claims were amended to recite that the fillet were on the exterior of the riser, and that the riser and the sealing dome overlap, the Dietrich reference, the Hammond reference, and the other art of record would be overcome.

Claims 2, 4-8, 13, 19 and 21-36 are pending the present application. Claims 24-35 have been withdrawn. At the above-discussed interview, Examiner Merek confirmed that Claim 36 was rejected under the same grounds as Claim 21. Applicants note that Claim 36 is generic to Claims 21 and 24 and therefore request allowance of all currently pending claims, including the withdrawn claims, upon an indication that Claims 21 and 36 are patentable.

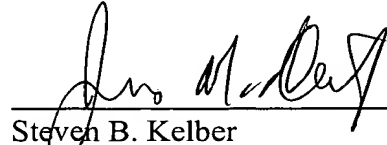
Claims 2, 4-8, 13, 19, 21-23 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 4,335,757 (Lankston), 5,295,391 (Mastandrea) and 5,582,318 (Dietrich), either alone or in combination with a fourth reference.

The claims have been amended to further clarify that the invention relates to a sealing dome and riser rather than a stopper for a bung receptacle or two halves of a storage tank. As discussed at the interview, these amendments further distinguish the inventions of Claims 21, 24 and 36 over the cited art of record.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all claims are believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. Allowance of the application is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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